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Q51

'Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres)', often in the news, is (a) A division of World Health Organization (b) A non-governmental international organization (c) An inter-governmental agency sponsored by European Union (d) A specialized agency of the United Nations Official key: B.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2016 · General Studies · 2 marks · Current Affairs and GK

Current events, government schemes, miscellaneous GK - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation**(a)**

A division of the World Health Organization would be a UN specialised-agency arm, such as a **WHO** programme or regional office. Médecins Sans Frontières is independent of **WHO** and is not a **WHO** division, so this option is not the key.

(b) Official key

Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières, MSF) is a private, independent non-governmental international organisation. It delivers emergency medical aid in conflict, epidemic and disaster settings and is funded mainly by private donations, not by a UN or EU mandate. That NGO character is why (b) is the official key.

(c)

An inter-governmental agency sponsored by the European Union would be created by treaty among governments, such as ECHO as a Commission service. MSF is not an EU inter-governmental body, so this option is wrong.

(d)

A specialised agency of the United Nations would sit in the UN system (**WHO**, UNICEF, UNHCR). MSF is not a UN specialised agency; it often works alongside UN agencies but remains a separate NGO. This option is therefore not the key.

Summary

Official key is (b) a non-governmental international organisation. Médecins Sans Frontières is an independent medical NGO, not a **WHO** division, not an EU inter-governmental agency, and not a UN specialised agency. It is known for emergency field hospitals and for speaking out on humanitarian access. Candidates should not equate a famous health NGO with the UN health architecture. Only (b) states its legal character correctly.

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Founded

1971, in the wake of the Biafra crisis, by French doctors and journalists

Nobel Peace Prize

Awarded to MSF in 1999

WHO

UN specialised agency for health; distinct from MSF

ICRC

Another independent humanitarian body, based on the Geneva Conventions

Charter principle

Independence, neutrality and impartiality in medical aid

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